United Nations

A/60/734

General Assembly

Distr.: General
24 March 2006
English
Original: Russian

Sixtieth session
Agenda item 73 (c)
Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance: strengthening of international cooperation and coordination of efforts to study, mitigate and minimize the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster

Letter dated 23 March 2006 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of the statement by the heads of State of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) addressed to the peoples of the CIS member States and the world community in connection with the twentieth anniversary of the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power station, adopted on 26 August 2005 in Kazan, the Russian Federation (see annex).

I should be very grateful if this letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly under agenda item 73 (c).

(*Signed*) Andrey **Denisov**

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Annex to the letter dated 23 March 2006 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Statement by the heads of State of the Commonwealth of Independent States addressed to the peoples of the CIS member States and the world community in connection with the twentieth anniversary of the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power station

On 26 April 2006, 20 years will have elapsed since the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power station. The scope and aftermath of the damage caused make this the largest man-made radiation disaster of the twentieth century.

In connection with this tragic date, the heads of State of the Commonwealth of Independent States address the peoples of the CIS member States, States Members of the United Nations and the entire world community with a reminder about the consequences of the Chernobyl accident.

As a result of the accident, millions of people were in shock from the calamity which they had trouble comprehending and against which they could not protect themselves. Many families lost their homes and livelihoods and were forced to change their familiar surroundings and way of life.

The scope of the disaster might have been beyond measure had it not been for the courage and selflessness of hundreds of thousands of disaster relief workers at the Chernobyl nuclear power station, our fellow countrymen. Risking their lives and health, they fulfilled their duty and protected people from the harmful effects and further spread of radiation.

Despite the extremely costly measures taken immediately following the disaster and in subsequent years, the Chernobyl nuclear power plant continues to be a potential source of danger in the centre of Europe. Minimizing this threat in the near future and on the basis of new technologies is in everyone's interest. There is therefore a need to muster in a centralized manner the scientific, technical and financial capacity of the entire world community to increase the safety of the protective shelter.

The comprehensive radiation clean-up and economic and social rehabilitation of the affected areas are issues of great importance in addressing the consequences of this terrible disaster at the present stage.

The affected regions are currently experiencing particularly difficult conditions caused by the destruction of the ecological infrastructure, the flight of labour resources and demographic problems. The state of the environment after the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power station restricts the living conditions of the population. Of particular concern is the state of health of both the inhabitants of the affected areas and the disaster relief workers.

The achievement of the main goal of rehabilitation — sustainable development and genuine economic recovery of the affected regions — requires new approaches, scientifically based decisions, significant outlays of resources and, consequently, financial, technical and scientific assistance from the international community.

Recognizing the unprecedented nature of the aftermath of the Chernobyl accident, and its effects on many generations, and paying tribute to the memory of those who died and those whose health has suffered as a result of the disaster at the Chernobyl nuclear power station, we declare our resolve to make every possible effort to minimize its consequences.